

REMARKS

Claim 1 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 2. Claim 13 is amended to correct a typographical error. Claim 2 is cancelled. Claims 1 and 3-20 are believed to be in condition for allowance, for the reasons given below.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 15-20 were indicated to be allowable over the prior art of record.

Claims 2-6 and 9-14 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but are indicated to be allowable over the prior art of record if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In keeping with this suggestion, claim 1 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 2. Claim 2 is cancelled. Because claims 3-6 and 9-14 depend from claim 1, they should now be in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 7, and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of U.S. Patent No. 6,504,197 to Minakata et al. ("Minakata") and U.S. Patent No. 5,902,690 to Tracy et al. ("Tracy").

Claim 1 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 2, which was indicated to contain allowable subject matter. Claim 2 is cancelled. Since amended claim 1 is written in independent form and contains the allowable subject matter of claim 2, claim 1 is now allowable over the prior art of record.

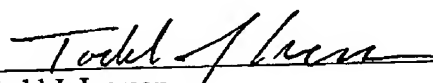
Claims 7 and 8 depend from claim 1. Any claim that depends from a nonobvious independent claim is also nonobvious. MPEP 2143.03.

Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1 and 3-20 is requested. Please telephone the undersigned at (503) 222-3613 if it appears that an interview would be helpful in advancing the case.

Respectfully submitted,

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